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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R7-FHC-2011-N188]

[FF07CMM00-FXFR13370700000L5-123]

Letters of Authorization to Take Marine Mammals

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of issuance.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA), we, the Fish and Wildlife Service, have issued letters of authorization for the nonlethal take of polar bears and Pacific walrus incidental to oil and gas industry exploration, development, and production activities in the Beaufort Sea and the adjacent northern coast of Alaska and incidental to oil and gas industry exploration activities in the Chukchi Sea and the adjacent western coast of Alaska.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Craig Perham at the Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Mammals Management Office, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503; (800) 362-5148 or (907) 786-3810.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

On August 2, 2006, we published in the *Federal Register* a final rule (71 FR 43926) establishing regulations that allow us to authorize the nonlethal, incidental, unintentional take of small numbers of polar bears and Pacific walrus during year-round oil and gas industry exploration, development, and production activities in the Beaufort Sea and adjacent northern coast of Alaska. The rule established subpart J in part 18 of title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and was effective until August 2, 2011. New regulations were issued on August 3, 2011 (76 FR 47010), effective through August 3, 2016. The rule prescribed a process under which we issue Letters of Authorization (LOAs) to applicants conducting activities as described under the provisions of the regulations. In accordance with section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) and our regulations at 50 CFR 18, subpart J, we issued an LOA to each of the following companies in the Beaufort Sea and adjacent northern coast of Alaska:

Beaufort Sea Letters of Authorization

COMPANY	ACTIVITY	PROJECT	DATE ISSUED
BP Exploration Alaska, Inc.	Development	Liberty Development Project	January 20, 2011
BP Exploration Alaska, Inc.	Development	Red Dog #1 Plug and Abandonment Project	January 20, 2011
Brooks Range Petroleum Corporation	Exploration	North Tarn Exploration Program	January 1, 2011
Brooks Range	Exploration	North Tarn Summer Clean Up	July 22, 2011

Petroleum Corporation		and Field Studies	
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc	Exploration	Hydrate Production Test, Ignik Sikumi I, Prudhoe Bay Unit	January 3, 2011
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Exploration	West Kuparuk 3D Seismic Exploration Program	January 3, 2011
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Development	Puviaq #1 Plug and Abandonment Program	January 10, 2011
Eni US Operating Co., Inc.	Development	Nikaitchuq Development Program	May 15, 2011
ExxonMobil Production Company	Development	Point Thomson	February 1, 2011
ExxonMobil Production Company	Exploration	Seafloor Sediment Sampling Program	July 11, 2011
FEX L.P.	Development	Plug and Abandonment Project, Aklaqyaaq #1, Aklaq #2, and Aklaq #6 Wells	January 10, 2011
Marsh Creek, LLC	Development	Corrective Action Activities, Umiat Test Well No. 9	February 11, 2011
North Slope Borough	Development	Gas Fields Well Drilling Program	April 15, 2011
Olgoonik Fairweather, LLC	Exploration	Beaufort Sea Acoustic Monitoring Recorder Deployment and Retrieval Project	July 15, 2011
Olgoonik Fairweather, LLC	Exploration	Central Beaufort Sea Fisheries Cruise Environmental Studies Program	July 15, 2011
Pioneer Natural Resources Alaska, Inc.	Development	Nuna Pre-Development Project	April 15, 2011
Savant Alaska, LLC	Development	Badami Unit Redevelopment Project	February 7, 2011
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Development	Beaufort Sea Ice Observation and On-Ice Argos Data Buoy Deployment Program	January 10, 2011
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Beaufort Sea Open Water Marine Survey Program and Onshore Environmental Baseline Study Activities	June 10, 2011

On June 11, 2008, we published in the *Federal Register* a final rule (73 FR 33212) establishing regulations that allow us to authorize the nonlethal, incidental, unintentional take of

small numbers of polar bears and Pacific walrus during year-round oil and gas industry exploration activities in the Chukchi Sea and adjacent western coast of Alaska. The rule established subpart I of 50 CFR part 18 and is effective until June 11, 2013. The rule prescribed a process under which we issue LOAs to applicants conducting activities as described under the provisions of the regulations. In accordance with section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA and our regulations at 50 CFR 18, subpart I, we issued an LOA to the following companies in the Chukchi Sea:

Chukchi Sea Letters of Authorization

COMPANY	ACTIVITY	PROJECT	DATE ISSUED
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Chukchi Sea Ice Observation Flights Program	January 10, 2011
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Chukchi Sea Coastal Marine and Onshore Environmental Baseline Study	May 15, 2011
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Chukchi Sea Baseline Environmental Studies Program	July 29, 2011
Statoil USA E&P, Inc.	Exploration	Chukchi Sea Shallow Hazards Survey Project	June 20, 2011

October 5, 2011 _____

E. LaVerne Smith

Acting Regional Director, Alaska Region

Date

~~[Notice of Issuance of Letters of Authorization to Take Marine Mammals in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas]~~

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